Members IT Panel End of Year Report - 2010

1.   Introduction

The Member's IT Panel was set up to represent the views and requirements of the Cheshire East Council Members with regard to their Information Technology and Communications requirements from Cheshire East Council.   The Panel is non-political and draws its membership from all of the main political parties.   It has met 13 times during this last municipal year and is making good progress, though its work is ongoing.

2.   Management Summary

Significant progress has been made this year, with the majority of Cheshire East Council PCs and Laptops now being encrypted and virtually all Members using 'Our Cheshire' to access their email system.   This has allowed Cheshire East to make good progress in complying with the security standard of 'Government Connect'.   A Member's Training Needs Analysis questionnaire has been completed and this is driving the provision of Member training.   Member Support is now available during the evenings and at the weekend and Support Calls are reducing. Finally a standard printer has been chosen and is being rolled out to all Members.

Items outstanding for future years are to complete the rollout of the Printers, continue to develop the Member Training options, to continue to refresh the Member's PCs or Laptops and to devise a Training and Support package for 'New Members'.

3.   The Inheritance.

When the Members IT Panel started this year in May 2009, the Council had inherited a number of different sets of PCs and Laptops, Printers, software and Member Skills.   The Member Support function was only operable during work hours and then from four different sources.   Printer consumables were many and various and spread throughout the Council offices.   The PCs were not encrypted, thereby failing the requirements of Government Connect.   Support calls were running at high levels.

4.   Achievements

4.1   PCs and Laptops: Over a quarter of the Members have received new PCs or Laptops, with a further rollout to come this year.

4.2   Printers: The Printer market has been examined and after a trial, 81 new Samsung CLX 3175 Laser Printers purchased.   These printers will print black and white and colour, copy, scan and fax.   The first few have been installed at Members' homes with a reference booklet, a training session and a supply of printer cartridges. The installation of a standard printer should reduce the number of Support calls, will improve the Support Call service and eliminate the need to store multiple types of printer cartridges.

4.3 Software: The vast majority of Members with Council supplied computers have had their equipment encrypted and virtually all Members now use the host based version of Microsoft Mail, 'Our Cheshire', thus making strong progress towards complying with Government Connect.

4.4 Member Skills: A 'Training Needs Survey' invited the Members to provide their view of their PC skill level and their training needs. 70 of the 81 Members replied, with the majority of Members feeling that they needed some training and a number feeling that they needed a comprehensive basic course. An ITQ Level 1 course is underway at present with fourteen Members attending. IT Guides are being prepared and focused PC Topic training sessions are being explored.

4.5 Member Support: There is now a single number (01625 504146)) for the IT Service Desk and an out-of-hours service of 5:00pm to 9:00pm Mon-Fri and 9:00am to 5:00pm Sat/Sun is provided. Outside of these hours a message can be left.

Support Calls are now running at around 10 calls per week.

5. Further Work

This year will see the remaining Cheshire East PCs and Laptops encrypted and the universal adoption of the email system 'Our Cheshire', in order to comply with the security standard, Government Connect.

There will be a further replacement of about a quarter of the old PCs and Laptops issued to Members with all Members migrating to the new Samsung Laser printers.

IT Training Guides will be produced and the option of focused PC Topic training sessions explored further.

A new support call logging system will be installed which will enable more detailed classification of the support calls in order to identify trends and thus take proactive action. The objective being through a program of training or technical resolution to reduce the number of support calls further.

Finally a Training and Support package will be developed for 'New Members' ready for May 2011.

John Narraway
Chairman Members IT Panel